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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the field of family therapy, this step-by-step guide applies principles of brief, solution-focused therapy to family-based services (FBS) in ways that empower clients, increase cooperation, and aid the survival of social workers. Based on the author's experience at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the book is divided into 9 chapters. Chapter 1, "What Is Family-Based Services?", describes FBS as a specialized service in child welfare that focuses on the family as the target of intervention, rather than on the child or the parents separately, and describes FBS practices, advantages and disadvantages, the influence of family therapy on this field, and guiding principles. Chapter 2, "The Initial Stage," provides information on initial client assessments, including pre-assessment activities, home visits, management of angry clients, and dealing with other systems, such as the school, public health service, or the courts. Chapter 3, "Defining the Problem," suggests exploring who is most concerned about what problems and family strengths. Chapter 4, "Developing Cooperation," discusses the client-therapist relationship (called "joining" the therapist and client) and empowering the client. Chapter 5, "Setting Goals and Making Contracts," discusses negotiation, guidelines for goals setting, and interviewing as an interactional process. Chapter 6, "Useful Questions and Other Interviewing Techniques," suggests the use of exception-finding questions, miracle questions, scaling questions, coping questions, and ending interviews. Chapter 7 deals with "Conducting a Family Session," while chapter 8 deals with "Middle Phase and Termination"--both of which involve ongoing evaluation--offering suggestions and tasks, dealing with change or with a worsening situation, reviewing and revising goals, and initiating termination of contact. Chapter 9, "Do Something Different," reviews the three rules of solution-focused therapy and discusses signs that indicate something different needs to be done. Chapter 10, "Special Problems," discusses multiproblem families, family violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Chapters include sample forms and checklists. (DR)